

Schlatter--The Man Who Would Be Messiah.

Healer Whose Mania Was Christianity, and His
 Days in the Weird, Waste Places of the South-
 West Down Into the Trackless Death Valley.

Among the Skeletons of Lost Miners, with Birds of Prey and
 Reptiles His Only Companions, He Finally Lay Down
 to Die with His Bible for His Pillow.



the bones of Fran-
 der a tree high up
 dre, in Chihuahua.
 any cattle saw some-
 the dead under the
 year since the
 the haunts
 southward
 uncanny,
 if male,
 to the
 the gray
 one, and
 The cur-
 een changed
 not begin to
 ence of the
 who banished
 he laying on
 himself, and
 rds that are
 e cured by

at Schlatter
 do. He had
 s quietly and
 need his mis-
 and spoke
 e cobbler
 where a
 had left
 th terror,
 and asked
 lived, and
 the cadaver-
 cobbler. He asked no
 ured his body and across
 eyes, and when he removed
 ne child screamed, but in a different
 Blind from birth, she now saw.
 s began Schlatter's career in Denver.
 news spread. First to the poorer
 rs. Men and women of culture and
 are slow to believe any one who
 to do them good for nothing, but
 ey came to Schlatter in time. He
 e bruises and the rheumatism of
 the palsy of the old women,
 ight the crooked limbs of the
 of the poor, and then his fame
 e class who could not come to
 with a deprecating, incredulous
 came. Within a month thou-
 at the cobbler's door to get

like a tale of the Middle Ages.
 tended to no divinity, though
 his hair and beard after the
 pictures of the Christ and
 his father. Had he sought
 e is no question that he
 founded a sect that would have
 n or been martyred for him as
 s come to redeem the world.

palace or private
 Who am I that I
 to wait upon me?"
 was declined, and
 car stood on the
 the shoemaker never

came through the
 enclosing hand-
 y the healer, for
 hat what he han-
 as efficacious as
 him whole again.
 s this a story of a
 when, according to
 angels and had wren-
 men for a soul, when
 th the devil, and monks
 ed the evil one as a part
 of a routine? It is
 now, but if you
 Fall of 1895
 alness asso-
 up-to-date nine-
 Philippine, fighters for
 repeating that they had
 physical ill by the touch
 handkerchief as that they
 in this mine or lost it in
 deal.

usand people believe in
 cures, and they for the
 a men and women who
 and had knowledge of his
 wements, who knew his
 "sacrifice, so for
 if wandering and
 are the voice of
 ept Schlatter.
 November 13, 1893,
 day on a rough
 ing the long brown
 while his disciples
 ade rest, for a mo-
 There were, for 5,000
 men and women, be-
 res closed and the
 adies were over for
 the house of a man
 true believers, and
 ble. One month of
 if milk sufficed for
 d. In the morning
 the door for his

ed had not been
 the family found
 alusion is fin-
 ne away. Good-
 ter of the rough
 int of his hob-
 as heard of the
 and all manners
 anance. Gravely
 e the announce-
 nounced to a
 and there were
 eed as wit-
 were ad-
 men. In
 ater had
 forly
 ghtly



"The Gaunt Figure Came Out of the Desert Into the Taos Valley."

On the Rooney ranch in the foothills of
 Gray Peak, in an abandoned hut, the Mes-
 siah remained until driven away by the
 pertinacity of his followers. To the first
 comers he told of revelations from on high
 and talks with the Biblical prophet.

Then he wandered on southward across
 untraveled mountains, cattle ranges and
 ghastly deserts. This was the beginning of
 the strange journey that ended under the
 big mesquite tree in the Sierra Madre.

A weird journey it was—a voyage that
 most men would shrink from, though fully
 armed and equipped for the wilderness;
 a journey full of every peril and hardship
 that the grim Southwest can furnish.
 Roncador Indians, the last unconquered
 remnant of the hostile bands broken up by
 the soldiers, still lurk in these mountain
 fastnesses. The sturdiest, sanest rider
 could hardly pass their ambushes and live,
 but this unarmed, Christ-faced cobbler
 came through scathless. Poisonous things
 crawled about the springs where he must
 drink, but spared this man. Over the
 deserts, marked by the bones of men and
 the cattle that have gone down in the
 hopeless fight against thirst and heat, he
 went in safety. Through outlaw haunts
 his long journey led him and no harm
 came to him there.

At long intervals men reported his wan-
 derings and thus in a measure his votaries
 were able to follow him in his aimless
 journey. What he sought even he could
 not say. What he found can never be
 known. Visions came to the sanest of men
 when the sun blazes down on the alkali
 plains and the broken white ground on the
 horizon trembles and beckons to the trav-
 eler. What visions, then, were present to
 this feeble, hardship-worn man who from
 the beginning was convinced of his own
 commerce with another world?

In December of the year of his disappear-
 ance he fell in with two cowboys on the
 Big Sandy. They had come far in the
 search for stock, had been cut off from
 the trail they knew, and were almost
 ready to die of exhaustion when they saw

the queer figure of the tall man with long
 hair patiently plodding behind his gray
 mule. They had made what they thought
 would be their last camp. They had taken
 their saddles from their ponies to ease the
 sore backs of the poor animals. They
 halted the man and asked him for the road,
 and he told them he knew no road. They
 thought it was a crazy man, and wondered
 how they could save him.

Without a word to them he stepped up
 to the ponies, touched them lightly on
 their bowed heads and passed his long,
 bony fingers over the awful saddle sores.
 Then he went on, and the weary cowboys
 saw his figure getting smaller and smaller
 as he ascended the mountains and started
 on across the desert they knew led only
 to death. Night came on and the lost cow-
 boys slept. In the morning they arose and
 looked at the ponies. The sores were
 healed. The animals were whole again
 and able to carry them back to the home
 ranch. The boys hurried to them that a
 sore pony's back frequently healed in a
 night in the dry mountain air. If it was
 protected from the dust. Maybe it was a
 lucky coincidence that these sores healed
 then, but the cowboys started out on a
 search for the man who had disappeared
 on the desert. They were willing to risk
 their lives again to save him, even though
 the boss herder did not believe in miracles.

They followed the man who had crossed the
 crusted waste for days, but they lost it where
 the sand changes to rock, and came back
 no wiser than they went, but they mar-
 velled that, though the footprints were
 clear in the sand, and they could even find
 where the man they sought had rested,
 there was no heap of ash or charred stick
 to show that he had camped. They had
 noted, when he was with them that he
 seemed to have no food, and they were
 thinking to die because their stock was
 exhausted.

At almost the end of 1895 the gaunt fig-
 ure came out of the desert into the Taos

Valley, in New Mexico. All this time a
 thousand newspapers show syndicates and
 revival promoters were searching by tele-
 graph for Schlatter the healer. The Mor-
 mons and the Mexicans of the Taos Val-
 ley flocked about him, begging him to cure
 their sick and crippled, and as he rode
 through the valley he blessed them as he
 had blessed the railroad millionaire up
 North, and now in that remote valley they
 call him a saint, and believe he will come
 again.

He rode out of the ken of this people,
 and so on to the West. The next report
 of him comes from the Gila River, a little
 below where the San Francisco crosses
 into it. The fords are treacherous there,
 particularly in the winter months, when
 the freshets come down. A teamster, val-
 uing the strength of the current, found
 himself swept back on the south bank.
 His wagon was upset, one of his horses in-
 jured and he himself had barely strength
 to crawl out on a sand bank and lie there.
 The teamster, when he got into Guthrie's
 day later, said that his leg was broken
 in the overturning outfit.

The rest of his story you will not be-
 lieve.

He said that as he lay there, six or seven
 hours after the accident, almost insensibil-
 ity with pain from his broken limb, a tall
 man with brown, curly hair and a thin,
 soft, golden brown beard rose up out of
 the river and stood beside him. He said
 the apparition had a face drawn and ghast-
 ly, as are the faces of men who have suf-
 fered much. He said that figure knelt in
 the wet sand beside him, spoke a prayer
 and passed a long, slender hand over the
 limb. Then the figure walked away and
 disappeared in the chapparal. He thought
 the man was a creature of his imagination
 begotten of delirium from pain. But it
 came to him gradually that the agony was
 getting less, that his fever was gone, and
 by nightfall he essayed to stand up, and
 he found that his limb was whole again,

though the bruises were still upon it.

In the Gila Valley naturally they ex-
 plain all this by saying that Schlatter un-
 doubtedly found the man on the river bank,
 mended some of his crazy words over
 him and left him, but the man's leg was
 not broken at all, and that in a few hours,
 his terror having passed, the cold water
 of the river reduced the inflammation and
 he was able to walk. That is easier to be-
 lieve than divine healing, and on the fron-
 tier they take the easiest explanation al-
 ways.

Schlatter was seen again near Lordsburg
 crossing the railroad, still bound West.
 He was next spoken to away over in Cali-
 fornia, near the Panamint mines. To get
 there he must have come down into Death
 Valley and over the Funeral Mountains.
 One of the old overland trails led that way,
 and this is marked by skeletons of men
 and animals.

So dry is Death Valley that men have
 been found dead of thirst there with
 canteens half full of water in their hands.
 Birds flying over fall dead on the borax
 and alkali. It is madness to attempt a
 passage of Death Valley without the most
 exact knowledge of the few springs that
 exist even on that salty plain.

The Funeral Mountains are a chaos of
 copper stained rock peaks—fantastic cliffs
 whose bright colors have given to the ex-
 tension of these mountains the name of
 the Painted Range. There is no water in
 them; not even sagebrush can cling to
 their rocky sides. They are horri-
 ble, desolate, and through these Schlatter
 came.

The miners had heard of him, but they
 have no faith in uncanny things in the
 Panamint Hills, and nobody asked the
 healer to exercise his power. They noticed
 his wild, worn looks; his ragged, insuffi-
 cient clothing; the total absence of food
 or the means of preparing it in his pack.
 They asked him where he was going, but
 he only smiled wanly and pointed down
 the mountain and on to the westward
 with the slender copper rod he carried.

They offered to supply him with food,
 but he told them he needed none and went
 his way.

Some months later the keeper of San
 Bernardino County Jail noticed among the
 prisoners who were sent to break rocks
 with ball and chain on their legs one who
 was different from the ordinary tramp who
 was put to this work. This was a tall,
 slender man with a patient face and
 brown, curling hair hanging to his shoul-
 ders. When this man reached his cell at
 night he neither smoked nor talked like
 the others, and barely touched the jail
 food provided for the prisoners' mess.

As long as there was light to see he read
 in a worn Testament he always carried.

In reply to the jailer's questions and sug-
 gestions that he ask for his release, the
 prisoner said it was a penance set before
 him that he did not wish to avoid. When
 they found it was Schlatter, the divine
 healer, they set him free.

He resumed his journey toward nowhere.
 He walked away to the southward, was
 seen at Yuma, and then turned to the
 east. He appeared on some of the moun-
 tain ranges about Denning, N. M. The cowboys
 treated him as a harmless lunatic. They
 left food for him, which he scarcely
 touched, and after a few days he left that
 vicinity with his wand pointing to the
 south. The very last living trace of him
 was at a point about sixty miles south of
 Lordsburg. There he repeated the miracle
 of the wounded pony. The cowboy who
 brought in the news to Lordsburg pro-
 fanely and almost in terror asserted that
 he was washing his pony's sore back in
 Black Creek when Schlatter came up and
 touched the saddle sores, which dried
 within half an hour. There is only the
 cowboy's word for it, and cowboys are not
 particularly truthful, but certain it is that
 when they examined the pony at the depot
 in Lordsburg they found the hair growing
 smoothly over what the rider declared was
 been a raw spot less than a week before.

This appearance was not far from the

foothills of the Sierra Madre, near
 Schlatter found rest at last.

It is easy to imagine the death
 After wandering thousands of leagues
 devoted man, esteemed crazy by in
 his fellows, almost worshipped by the
 naut, and never doubting himself
 instant, found a place sufficiently
 to be secure from human inter-
 There he started to carry out his
 tial fast—to live for forty days and
 alone without food, sustained by
 prayer and the divinity within him.

He made his camp, hung his saddle
 sicker in the branches of the tree
 spread his blanket on the ground
 Then he lay down and waited for
 the elements he knew must come before
 trial was over.

When he grew weak he felt it was
 the ecstasy of faith. A man who lies
 in the Mexican mountains without
 does not have to wait long for vis-
 Certain it is that before the end was
 Schlatter was satisfied. You can ima-
 him talking to the shadow of hearing
 that swung in the breeze and hearing
 answers he waited for in the rustle
 in the ravine below him and the
 of the wind among the rocks and
 the cowboy who found his bones
 months after he had gone ten lay the
 Sierra Madre says that the skeletons
 were over the hollow and ridged chest.
 leg was drawn up, and the skull was
 loved on the Bible that bore his name.

He may have left a message for his
 followers, but the weather had bleached
 writing off loose sheets of paper that
 among the rocks.

Even in death there is a marvel about
 Schlatter. The Sierra Madre are full
 of carion bones, and the sky is dotted with
 buzzards and vultures on the lookout
 for the dead.

But neither sneaking coyote nor snarling
 buzzard scattered the bones of this stran-
 ger whose mania was Christianity and
 whose madness was humanity.